COURSE NO.  573 - 001
COURSE TITLE  Women's Riots in Colonial Africa Section of
Undergraduate Studies in the History of Africa

INSTRUCTOR  Mr. Steven Feierman

Semester II  Year 1979

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to teach students how historians create
history—especially the history of women and the family in the Third World.
No background in African history is necessary.

The entire course focuses on a single event: a series of riots in
southeastern Nigeria in 1929, in which women attacked British colonial
offices, tore up railroad tracks, destroyed telegraph wires, and beat up
local chiefs. The event has been chosen for three reasons. First, because
of its intrinsic interest. Second, because a wealth of primary materials is
available at Memorial Library, including records of testimony by many of
the women who took part, household budgets listing income and expenditures
for men and women, descriptions of informal women's organizations, and much
more. Third, a study of the women's riots draws us into broader questions
about the evolution of the family and of the local economy under colonialism,
and also about the role of women in social and political movements around
the world.

The class, which will be limited in size, will meet once a week. Each week
students will be given a set of documents to read, and to interpret themselves,
without any guidance from the works of historians or lectures by the instructor.
As the semester progresses the members of the class will create their own
interpretations of what happened, why it happened, and how it fits into the history
of the region. Students will read accounts by historians late in the
semester, only once the students' own positions have become clear. At two
points during the semester students will write papers on questions which will
either be set by the instructor, or decided on through class suggestions and

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS and EXAMINATIONS

GRADING SYSTEM

REQUIRED READINGS